(d) what are the side-effects which are caused due to continuous degradation of environment in Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) According to the Central Pollution Control Board, the water pollution in terms of Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) and vehicular pollution levels have come down. The Biochemical Oxygen Demand levels at Nizamuddin and Agra Canal (Okhla) have come down from about 8.0 mg/litre to 5 mg/litre and 12.0 mg/litre to 5 mg/litre respectively. Percentage reduction in vehicular pollution in terms of Carbon monoxide, oxides of nitrogen, sulphur dioxide and lead has been observed to the extent of about 22%, 5%, 20% and 49% respectively.

(c) The steps being taken to bring down the pollution in Delhi include stringent emission norms, improvements in fuel quality and vehicle technology, phasing out of old commercial vehicles, promotion of use of clean fuel, augmentation of public transport system, optimisation of traffic flow and development of road infrastructure, setting up of sewage and effluent treatment plants, shifting of industrial units in conforming industrial areas and closing of hazardous industrial units.

(d) Environmental health implications in the form of increase in morbidity and mortality may be caused due to continuous degradation of environment.

Building Roads through private sector in Maharashtra

†932. SHRI SATISHCHANDRA SITARAM PRADHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry have received any proposal to build roads through private sector in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, since when it is pending and the reasons therefor; and

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(c) by when it would be considered?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Three proposals for construction of roads on BOT basis, namely, Mumbai-Talasari, Mumbai-Nasik and Mumbai-Mahad Expressways were received from Government of Maharashtra in September 1998 for environmental clearance. Due to inadequate information, the proposals on Mumbai-Nasik and Mumbai-Mahad Expressway were closed in December 1999 and June 1999 respectively. In respect of Mumbai-Talasari, though the proposal was closed in April, 1999 due to inadequate information, clarifications were received in January 2000 and the file was reopened for further processing.

Rate of afforestation and deforestation

933. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the area under forestry in 60s, 70s, 80s and in 1999;

(b) the rate of afforestation and deforestation taking place in the country; and

(c) what is its distinct effect on environment and ecology, felt so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) As per records, legal forest area of the country were 40.48, 66.80 and 76.52 million hectares in 1950-51, 1976-77 and 1993—95 respectively.

(b) Forest Survey of India started assessing forest cover of the country from 1987. As per State of Forest Reports, forest cover of the country has declined from 6,40,819 sq.km to 6,33,397 sq.km. in the period from 1981—83 to 1993—95. An area of 28.38 million hectares has been brought under afforestation from 1951 to 1998.